II. AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for accessing information in an intranet through a firewall, ~~of dispatching an IP datagram comprising socks traffic on a socks server, in an Internet Protocol (IP) network comprising a plurality of socks servers, said IP datagram comprising an IP header comprising a Type Of Service (TOS) field,~~ said method comprising the steps of:

in a socks dispatcher:

retrieving a value of a Type Of Service (TOS) field from an IP header of an IP datagram that includes socks traffic on a socks server, in an Internet Protocol (IP) intranet network having a plurality of socks servers ~~the value of a Type Of Service (TOS) field from the IP header of the IP datagram~~; and

selecting a socks server ~~\ referring to a first table \, said first table defining for each value of the TOS field assigned priority one or a plurality of socks servers~~ solely on the basis of the retrieved TOS value.

2. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein the selecting step includes assigning a priority to the ~~said~~ IP datagram based solely the retrieved TOS value, ~~is sent by an IP network device with a given priority, and wherein said step of retrieving the value of the Type Of Service (TOS) field is followed by the further step of:~~

~~in the socks dispatcher:~~

~~determining the priority of the IP datagram by referring to a second table, said second table defining a priority for each value of the Type Of Service (TOS) field.~~

3. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 2 wherein the selecting step uses the priority based solely on the retrieved TOS value to select the socks server, ~~said IP datagram comprises data according to a given application level protocol, said step of determining the priority of the IP datagram comprising the further step of:~~

~~determining the application level protocol of data transported in said IP datagram by referring to said second table, said second table defining a priority and an application level protocol for each value of the Type Of Service (TOS) field.~~

4. (Original) The method according to claims 1 or 2 wherein in case of congestion in one or a plurality of output queues, said step of determining the priority of the IP datagram is followed by the further steps of:

discarding in said one or plurality of output queues IP datagrams having the lowest priority until there is no more congestion, and

discarding the IP datagram when said IP datagram compared with IP datagrams in said one or plurality of output queues, has the lowest priority.

5. (Currently Amended) The method according to claims 1 or 2 wherein ~~said~~ the selection step refers to a first table ~~comprises~~ for each sock server, each record in the first table having:

an identifier , preferably an address,

one or a plurality of TOS field values,

optionally, a sock server capacity,

optionally, application level protocols supported by the socks server.

6. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim ~~2~~ 5 comprising the initial steps of:

configuring ~~said~~ the first table, ~~and~~

configuring a second table ~~tables~~ for assigning the priority to the IP datagram based solely on the retrieved TOS value, the second table having a priority and an application level protocol for each TOS value,

defining a default socks server for values of the Type Of Service (TOS) field not defined in the first table, and

defining a default priority and optionally a default application level protocol for values of the Type Of Service (TOS) field not defined in the second table.

7. (Currently Amended) The method according to claims 1 or 2 wherein the step of selecting a socks server refers ~~referring~~ to a first table, said first table defining for each value of the Type Of Service (TOS) field one or a plurality of socks servers, ~~comprises~~ comprising the further steps of:

determining the number of socks servers defined for the value of the Type Of Service (TOS) field retrieved from the IP datagram:

- if only one socks server is defined in the first table, forwarding the IP datagram to said socks server, and
- if more that one socks server is defined in the first table, forwarding the IP datagram

to a socks server selected according to its capacity and the priority of the IP datagram.

8. (Currently Amended) A socks dispatcher comprising:

an ~~ip~~ IP intranet network comprising a plurality of socks servers, and

an IP datagram comprising an IP header, said IP header comprising aType of Service (TOS) field wherein said socks dispatcher

retrieves a value of said TOS field from the IP header of the IP datagram, and

selects a socks server based solely on the retrieved TOS field value by referring to a first table, said first table defining for each value of the TOS field, one or a plurality of socks servers.

9. (Currently Amended) A dispatcher according to claim 8 further comprising an IP network device wherein said IP datagram is sent by said IP network device with a given priority, and wherein said retrieving step is followed by a step of:

determining the priority of the IP datagram by referring to a second table, said second table defining a priority for each value of the Type of Service (TOS) field.

10. (Currently Amended) A computer program product on a computer readable medium having computer readable program code for dispatching an IP datagram comprising socks traffic on a socks server, in an Internet Protocol (IP) intranet network comprising a plurality of socks servers, said IP datagram comprising an IP header comprising a Type Of Service (TOS) field, said computer readable program code comprising the steps of:

in a socks dispatcher:

computer readable program code means for retrieving the value of a Type Of Service (TOS) field from the IP header of the IP datagram; and

computer readable program code means for selecting a socks server based solely on the retrieved TOS field value by referring to a first table, said first table defining for each value of the TOS field one or a plurality of socks servers.

11. (Original) The computer program product according to claim 10 wherein said IP datagram is sent by an IP network device with a given priority, and wherein said step of retrieving the value of the Type Of Service (TOS) field is followed by the further step of:

in the socks dispatcher:

computer readable program code means for determining the priority of the IP datagram by referring to a second table, said second table defining a priority for each value of the Type Of Service (TOS) field.